



U.S. Forest Service
Six Rivers National Forest
1330 Bayshore Way
Eureka, CA 95501
Voice: 707.442.1721
www.fs.usda.gov/srnf

News Release

Media Contacts: Bridget Litten, 707.441.3673
Peggi Lawrence, 707.441.3595



Forest Service invests in “all lands” aquatic restoration

EUREKA, California, July 2, 2015 – Forest Supervisor Merv George Jr. announced today that the Forest Service will be initiating the 30-day Scoping period from July 2 to August 3, 2015 for the *Six Rivers National Forest-wide (SRNF) Aquatic Restoration Environmental Assessment*. This proposed action involves a diverse suite of instream and riparian restoration activities and highlights key operational design criteria aimed at enhancing habitat conditions for aquatic species. In alignment with State and Federal recovery plans to improve instream habitat for coho salmon; also considered beneficial to all salmon, trout and other aquatic species, this *Aquatic Restoration Project* will be a milestone to step up on the ground, adaptive management restoration work.

National Forests and Grasslands are the largest single source of water in the continental U.S., contributing nearly 20 percent of the Nation’s water supply. However, a history of fire suppression and past land management activities necessitate that the Forest Service take an active approach to restoring watershed conditions, protecting communities and their drinking water, cultural amenities and sustaining aquatic wildlife; particularly impaired critical habitat for federally-listed threatened, endangered and sensitive fisheries.

“I believe a non-traditional “all lands” approach is vital to help prioritize and strategically implement integrated restoration to safeguard our local natural resources, bearing in mind fiscal and operational constraints”, said George. He emphasized, “During the 30-day Scoping period, my interest is to provide opportunities for public comment and collaboration with those dedicated to land stewardship; especially as the Wyden Amendment (Public Law 109-54, Section 434) allows the Forest Service to enter into cooperative agreements with willing Federal, Tribal, State, and local governments, private and nonprofit entities, and landowners to conduct complementary restoration work on private lands”.

“Last December and January, my staff hosted and participated in a series of pre-NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) meetings to get the public’s thoughts and ideas on what aquatic restoration should look like on the forest,” said George. He added, “From your feedback at those meetings, I have decided to go forward with a suite of activities that will now be analyzed through the NEPA process.”

Although not inclusive, proposed restoration activities include:

- Adding large, woody debris to provide cover for juvenile coho salmon;
- Developing side-channel areas for winter rearing and riparian treatments to encourage species diversity;
- Manual restoration activities in wilderness areas associated with identified fish bearing streams;
- Restoration activities for non-anadromous fish and other aquatic species found in natural ponds, lakes and in support of warm water fisheries, such as Ruth Reservoir; and
- Restoration and cleanup of illegal marijuana grow operations that may be impacting the quantity and quality of water, as well as aquatic species and their associated habitat.

A full description of proposed restoration activities may be found online at

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Everyone is encouraged to provide comments by August 3, 2015. Your comments may be (1) mailed or hand-delivered (office hours 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays) to Six Rivers National Forest, Attn: Carolyn Cook, 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, CA 95501; (2) faxed to 707.442.9242; or (3) emailed to comments-pacificsouthwest-six-rivers@fs.fed.us with a subject line of *Six Rivers National Forest Aquatic Restoration Project*.

For additional information, contact project lead Carolyn Cook at 707.441.3551 or cacook@fs.fed.us.

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The mission of the U.S. Forest Service, part U.S. Department of Agriculture, is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation’s clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

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